

NEWS & VIEWS

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October 2003

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE: NEW DIRECTIONS FOR A NEW ORGANIZATION

By Karen Timberlake

Those of you who have been receiving News & Views for some time have no doubt noticed several changes with this edition. This month's newsletter came to you electronically, rather than printed on paper and delivered by interdepartmental mail. The newsletter also sports a colorful new design that we hope makes it more readable and easier on the eyes. Finally, the name of the newsletter itself has changed from *DER News & Views* to *News & Views*, with "Office of State Employment Relations" sharing the banner.

This brings me to another recent change – the Department of Employment Relations has been transformed into the Office of State Employment Relations, or OSER for short. This change is a result of the biennial budget, signed into law by Governor Doyle in July. If you followed the budget process closely, you may recall that Governor Doyle initially proposed merging DER into the Department of Administration. As the budget wended its way through the legislative process, a compromise proposal was put forward to transfer the state employment relations functions into an independent office, attached to DOA for administrative purposes. This proposal was passed by the legislature and was approved by Governor Doyle. Hence, OSER came into being.

So, what has changed? DER Deputy Secretary Susan Crawford and I have new titles. Susan will now serve as OSER's Executive Assistant, and I have been appointed by Governor Doyle as OSER's Director. Both of us are very pleased to be staying on with OSER and look forward to working with the talented, dedicated OSER staff, and with you, to address workforce challenges facing Wisconsin state government.

The restructuring also means that OSER has no administrative services division within the agency. OSER's administrative services (budget, purchasing, IT, human resources) are now provided by our friends at DOA. Moreover, we hope that OSER's new affiliation with DOA will create opportunities for collaboration in enterprise-wide initiatives affecting state employment. For the short term, we remain at DER's former headquarters at 345 West Washington Avenue. Finally, we expect that OSER soon will relocate to the DOA building at 101 East Wilson Street.

What has not changed? OSER's central business functions and divisional structure remain the same. OSER retains DER's division structure, including divisions of Compensation and Labor Relations, Affirmative Action, and Merit Recruitment and Selection. Preserving these three divisions ensures that the state's needs in the key areas of labor relations, affirmative action, and management of the civil service will continue to be met.

OSER is also pleased to welcome Patty Almond as the new Administrator of the Division of Merit Recruitment and Selection. Patty was appointed as DMRS Administrator of DER by Governor Doyle in early August 2003, and was reappointed shortly thereafter to the same position in OSER. She is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the state civil service and running OSER's largest division. Patty brings substantial experience in human resources, particularly recruitment and selection, to her position, not to mention a lot of fresh ideas and energy.

We hope you enjoy the new format of the *News and Views* and continue to rely on OSER for timely information affecting state supervisors and other non-represented employees.



Karen Timberlake
Director, OSER

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Special points of interest:

- What's New: OSER and *News & Views*
- Clarification of Public Records Law Changes
- OSER Programs Aid Job Seekers and You
- New Health Insurance Model Explained



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RECORDS: ARE THEY OPEN OR CLOSED?

By David Vergeront

In state service, two things are certain: budget battles and public record requests. While the budget battles are left to the politicians, each of us has probably been involved in some way with at least one public record request in the past several months. Although agency legal counsel oversee responses to the requests to ensure compliance with the law, all levels of staff usually play some part in responding to such requests—taking the call, receiving the letter, looking through files, gathering documents or producing documents off the computer.

The presumption is that a record is “open” and subject to disclosure “unless otherwise provided by law.” There are some state and federal laws that exempt specific personnel-related documents/information from disclosure. A listing of “P-file” documents that are open or closed can be found in the Office of State Employment Relations’ Bulletin OSER-0001-DO-MRS (September 3, 2003).

Some of the most challenging requests (and of most interest to state employees) are those that seek personnel related documents/information. Recent legislation should help provide greater clarity in this difficult area. On August 11, 2003, Governor Jim Doyle signed into law 2003 Wisconsin Act 47 (effective August 26, 2003), which prohibits disclosure of certain personnel related documents/information not previously exempt by specific laws. This new law also provides much needed guidance regarding notice to subjects of requests and timelines for certain action to prevent disclosure. The following represent the major changes of the Act that impact on personnel-related documents/information in the public sector.

A. Records containing the following are **closed** for employees who do not hold a state public office:



CLOSED??

1. Home address, home electronic mail address, home telephone number and social security number, unless the person has authorized release of such information; [NOTE: These items must be redacted from all documents, unless the person has authorized release of such information.]

2. Information relating to current uncompleted investigations of employees for a criminal offense or employment-related misconduct prior to completion of the investigation;
3. Information pertaining to an employee’s employment exam, except an exam score if access to that score is otherwise not prohibited¹; and
4. Information relating to specific employees used by an

employer for staff management planning, including performance evaluations, recommendations concerning future salary adjustments, promotions, job assignments, letters of reference or other comments or ratings relating to employees.

B. The statute creates a notice procedure² which generally governs the release of records containing personally identifiable information about “record subjects” other than state or local public officials in the following circumstances:

1. Records containing information relating to the results of completed investigations of public and private sector employees into disciplinary matters involving the violation of an employment-related statute, ordinance, rule, regulation or policy;
2. Records obtained through a subpoena or search warrant; and
3. A record prepared by an employer other than an authority, if that record contains information relating to an employee of that employer, unless the employee authorizes the authority to provide access to that information.



OPEN??

C. Other interesting provisions of the Act:

1. A definition of “state public office” has been added.
 - a. There are restrictions on responses to requests for documentation/information regarding individuals that occupy a “state public office.” That phrase includes elected officials, appointees of the governor, unclassified appointees such as deputy secretary, executive assistant and division administrator, certain high-level positions within the University of Wisconsin System and other specified positions; the definition does not include positions at the Legislative Council, Legislative Fiscal Bureau and the Legislative Reference Bureau. If a decision is made to release documents, including those of a completed investigation of a disciplinary matter (after first applying the balancing test) relating to a person holding a “state public office,” notice of the request must be given to the subject; the notice must also advise the employee that he/she has the right to augment the records to be released with “written comments and documentation selected by the record subject.”
 - b. A person holding a “state public office”

(Continued on page 3)

¹An employee is entitled to his/her exam score. (s. ER-MRS 6.07, Wis. Adm. Code)

² Compliance with the notice requirements should be handled by legal counsel because there are mandatory timelines that trigger specific types of action.

EXAM SCORE REUSE GAINS FLEXIBILITY

By Dean Paynter

WiscJobs, the state job recruitment website, allows greater flexibility to agencies and job applicants in reusing civil service exam scores for multiple recruitments.

"Reuse" applies primarily to multiple choice exams and continuous recruitment registers like Office Support. When an exam is given, an applicant may choose to reuse their score from the last time they took the exam instead of taking it again. As they approach the end of their registrant eligibility period they must do something, either retest or reuse, in order to remain active on the register. We require some action on the part of applicants to indicate that they are still actively seeking employment. We don't want register lists cluttered with applicants who are no longer active job seekers. So periodically we require them to either test again or, at the least, send us an application reusing

their last score, as a sign that they are still actively looking and we should keep them active on the register.

Under the old system, the reuse time period was limited to six months. After six months, the applicant had to take the test again. They would have to attend a Saturday morning test center. This was an inconvenience for the applicants, unnecessarily increased the numbers at our test centers, and was not needed from a testing point of view. For example, if an applicant passed the *Biologist* exam and proved that they were qualified to be on the register, why should we require them to prove it again six months later?

With the new flexibility in reuse policy, we can set the reuse time period to any length up to three years. In most cases reuse is established at six months or twelve months.

Reuse periods vary from one exam to another. Applicants receive a grade notice, which tells them what their indi-

vidual reuse period is. For example: "You may reuse your score from this exam through November 11, 2003."

Applicants also have a registrant eligibility period. For example, we want the *Biologist* applicant to do something every twelve months to indicate that they are still actively seeking a job. When they approach the end of their registrant period, they can simply submit a reuse application and they will remain active on the register.

This is an overview of the subject of reuse. For specifics about the reuse policy see Chapter 200 of the Wisconsin Human Resource Handbook titled "Establishing Reuse, Retest, Registrant Eligibility Periods and Register Expiration Dates." It is available on the OSER website at <http://oser.state.wi.us> at the Reference Center.



RECORDS: OPEN OR CLOSED? (CONT.)

(Continued from page 2)

is covered by the provision that prevents access to records containing information maintained, prepared or provided by an employer concerning home address, home electronic mail address, home telephone number or social security number unless the person authorizes release. [NOTE: This prohibition does not apply to the home address of a person that holds an elective public office or of a person who is required to reside in a specified location as a condition of employment.]

c. A person holding a "state public office" cannot seek a court order preventing disclosure of documents/information.

2. There is a change to sec. 230.13, Wis. Stats.

Sec. 230.13(3)(b), Wis. Stats., has been added to permit the Director of the Office of State Employment Relations and the Administrator of the Divi-

sion of Merit Recruitment and Selection to release to an agency personnel information relating to the hiring and recruitment process, including specifically, exam scores and ranks and other evaluations of applicants.

3. Unless notice to the subject of a request is authorized, none is required.
4. Unless there is a provision that authorizes the subject of the request to seek judicial review of a decision to release, there is no right to judicial review.

It is important to keep in mind that when dealing with a public record request one should follow the agency's procedures and work with agency legal counsel to ensure that the response is in compliance with the law.



Important...to ensure response is in compliance with the law.

EXPANDING RECRUITMENT SERVICES— NEW OSER STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

By Demetri Fisher & Jennifer Gebert

People ask: "Why bother to recruit? Isn't the state on a hiring freeze, laying people off, and generally downsizing?" This may be so, but even in slow hiring periods, the state still needs to conduct business and to backfill due to attrition. Agencies will still want to hire top talent to develop their workforce. Positions will open due to retirements and natural attrition, so our recruitment efforts and strategies need to remain fresh

"... recruitment efforts and strategies need to remain fresh and innovative."

and innovative. There are some important points to consider when making a plan to move forward with any kind of recruitment strategy.

The Office of State Employment Relations' (OSER) Division of Affirmative Action (DAA) has been involved in the recruitment of target groups (ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and women) since the division's inception. These efforts, at the close of fiscal year 2002, culminated in the highest percentage of ethnic minorities ever recruited into state service. In addition, we now have record numbers of women in non-traditional state service positions, while persons with disabilities are currently employed consistently in almost every job group.

This success has not happened overnight, but is the result of thirty years of work by DAA in partnership with hundreds of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) professionals in agencies and on university campuses. In recent years, this success was achieved by casting broad nets into the available labor force and bringing in as many target groups as possible

per exam to bolster the ranks of certifications. This volume approach increased the odds that members of target groups might get hired from any given register.

In the waning months of 2003, with tight budgets and related workforce reduction, recruitment for target groups becomes more critical. However, the approach is not necessarily to cast the broad net as in years gone by, but by intensive selective recruiting.

A natural attrition rate happens in all employee categories and it is no different for target groups. Some people retire; others move on to positions outside of state service; some go back to school or move out of the state. Little by little, the hard-won gains may start to fizzle. If such a gradual decline in the numbers of target groups occurs unabated, we could slide back to pre-1970's numbers without even realizing it and have to start all over again someday.

Our recruitment strategies today must build the infrastructure and create the pipeline to maintain the success we have struggled so hard to attain. However, this means the harder and more labor/research intensive work of finding just the right people with just the right skills for the positions agencies and universities will be filling in the future.

To this end, the Division of Affirmative Action, in partnership with OSER's Division of Merit Recruitment and Selection (DMRS), is working on a three-tier recruitment strategy. This strategy involves three "companies" and will ultimately be rolled into the OSER strategic plan.

The first tier would be called the **Advertising Agency**. The purpose of this tier is to profile state government as an employer of choice. The state is a great place to work and we will always need to sell this point to the public and to hard-to-reach ethnic communities.

The second tier would be called the **Client Services Program**. This will be the largest of the three tiers. Services provided for this group include job referrals, tracking applicant progress, and providing open door availability for questions and answers. We would continue to provide referrals to resources for resume writing, interviewing techniques, and other services as requested. The purpose of this tier is to provide a diversified pool of high quality candidates that we can reliably refer to agencies and universities for employment purposes.

The final tier would be called **Talent Sourcing**. This service would be a resource for candidates whom we have met through networking. This tier will focus on sourcing top-level talent for hard-to-fill management and specialized technical positions.

This is a much more complex and ambitious recruitment strategy than we have had in the past and this initiative will take time to develop and implement. As such, this article is intended to provide agencies with a preview of services to come. All applicants will be required to follow the civil service hiring procedures, to maintain the integrity of the merit recruitment selection process.

If you would like more information or recruitment assistance, please feel free to contact the Employment Services Center at esc@oser.state.wi.us. It is our goal to create a full-service, multi-divisional recruitment process as a part of the OSER Strategic Direction. We look forward to growing with you.

OVERCOMING:

*A successful person is one who can lay
a firm foundation with the bricks
that others throw at him or her.*

—David Brinkley

JOB CENTER EMPLOYMENT SERVICES— A VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR W-2 HIRING

By Kathryn Moore

State agencies and universities have been busy putting together their Wisconsin Works (W-2) hiring plans for the upcoming year. As a resource to assist with plan implementation and meeting W-2 employment and retention goals, local Job Centers around the state provide many services to assist W-2 job seekers.

As a way of tapping into this pool of applicants, agencies are encouraged to utilize services provided by their local Job Center. The State Employment Options (SEO) Program, a Job Center



partner, offers the "How to Get a State Job" workshop state-wide. In addition, SEO provides test preparation workshops,

on-site exams at the Job Centers, and other recruitment activities in Madison and Milwaukee to assist state agencies with recruitment efforts for permanent positions. SEO services are provided statewide upon request. This program has been providing services to W-2 job seekers since 1988. In fiscal year '03, SEO provided services to nearly 3000 applicants.

SEO encourages the use of Community Service Jobs (CSJ) training positions (work experience). This program can benefit agencies by allowing them to grow their own employees for future vacancies while they give the job seeker the experience they need to learn new skills. Job seekers may pursue state employment following the CSJ training. Of course, CSJ positions may not replace existing permanent positions.

A CSJ training position is generally very structured and is based on a position description and training plan that

is developed by the state agency. In addition to the training, the counselor follows-up with the employer and employee on a regular basis so that issues are addressed as they arise. Dane County is always seeking CSJ sites.

When job seekers are ready for competitive employment, SHEA Services in Dane County provides placement and retention services to the job seeker and the employer. SHEA provides support and training to job seekers both before and after they find employment. All county agencies have a similar program and agencies are encouraged to contact their local Job Center for referrals.

Placement services assist job seekers in preparing for their job search based on each individual's needs. Assistance offered includes developing a resume and cover letter, interviewing practice, moral support and assisting them with how to properly explain employment gaps or issues they may have had with past employment or a criminal background. They also assist the job seeker with marketing themselves to employers overall. SHEA Services also offers typing and PC tutorials which job seekers use to upgrade or enhance their skills prior to the interview.

The placement specialist may also work with employers to assist them in finding a good match for available limited term employment (LTE) vacancies. In some cases employers call the placement specialist with details on the job they are filling and he/she will refer appropriately "matched" applicants for the job vacancy. The specialist will collect the resumes and applications and forward them on to the department's Human Resource department. This can save the agency time in recruiting W-2 job seekers.

After a job seeker obtains employment they are referred to the SHEA Ser-

vice's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and work with a SHEA retention staff person whose role is to provide support to employees and employers. An Employee Assistance Specialist (EAS) follows up with clients and employers on a regular basis so job barriers are eliminated before they become overwhelming and result in a job loss. SHEA is familiar with the vast array of community resources such as rent assistance, food programs and childcare and can refer employees to the services that they need to keep their job. SHEA specialists are also trained in conflict resolution, which is a resource that agencies can access.

These are just a few of the services available in Job Centers in Dane County and around the state. You may contact your local Job Center for assistance in recruiting, hiring, and retaining employees. Job Centers can be contacted through the following link <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dws/directory>. Or contact State Employment Options program for additional information.

Information Meeting: SEO is hosting an information meeting in Madison with the Job Center service providers on November 3, 2003, at 1:00 P.M. Please contact us at (608) 266-9472 to make a reservation.

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(608) 266-9472

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*"You can't do anything about the length of your life,
but you can do something about its width and depth."*

Evan Esar

3-TIER HEALTH INSURANCE MODEL EMPHASIZES QUALITY, ACCESS, AND EFFICIENCY

*By Tom Korpady, Administrator,
Division of Insurance Services
Department of Employee Trust Funds*



As you may have heard, changes are in the works for the state employee health insurance program. A new premium structure for the state health insurance program was approved by the Group Insurance Board in November 2002, proposed by Governor Jim Doyle in his biennial budget in February 2003, and was made law in July 2003, as part of the biennial budget. These changes affect the premium structure, but *not* the level of benefits provided to state employees under the state health plans. All plans will continue to offer uniform benefits as required by state law.

Most state employees and their families receive their health insurance through HMOs. A smaller percentage have chosen the Standard Plan I or Standard Plan II, which are fee-for-service or "indemnity" plans. HMOs in Wisconsin have, in general, been of very high quality. State employees have given the plans very high ratings, as evidenced by their scores on the annual report cards and Consumer Assessment of Health Plans (CAHPs) surveys. Wisconsin HMOs have also consistently scored higher on Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS) measures than HMOs nationwide. These measures track HMOs' success in providing important preventive care to their participants, including childhood immunizations, cancer and cholesterol screenings, and management of common conditions such as asthma and diabetes. In fact, according to National Council on Quality Assurance, 4 Wisconsin HMOs are among the top 15 accredited health

care providers nationwide, based on effectiveness of care measures.

The state employee health insurance program currently includes over 20 health plans, providing services to over 60,000 state employees and their families. Prior to the passage and signing of the biennial budget in July, state statutes required the state to pay health plan premiums of up to 105% of the lowest-cost health plan in a particular county. Any plan that bid within 5% of the lowest-cost plan was provided at no cost to employees, just like the plan that submitted the lowest bid. Approximately 75% of state employees did not contribute toward their health insurance premiums.

The 105% formula had some significant shortcomings. Under the formula, HMOs had no incentive to be the lowest cost plan; rather, they targeted their rates at 5% above what they expected the lowest cost plan would bid. If they guessed right and came in at exactly 105% of the lowest cost plan, they would increase their income and employees would see no difference in their out-of-pocket premium costs and have no incentive to choose the lowest cost plan. Further, the bidding process did not account for the population served by a health plan and the "risk" (costs) associated with serving that population. Thus, a plan's ability to bid the lowest premium was often a function of a better risk pool (that is, a healthier participant base) rather than the plan's efficiency in delivering health care. This led some HMOs to drop out of the state program because they could not be competitive based on the risk factors of their membership. The formula also created inequities between employees in different counties because the employer contribution amount was calculated on a county-by-county basis. The formula did not give credit to health plans that scored especially high on nationally recognized measures of patient safety and quality or on

customer satisfaction surveys. Finally, the formula caused healthier employees to move out of the Standard Plan, leaving only high-risk employees in the Standard Plan. This movement drove up the cost of the Standard Plan to the point that the plan became unaffordable for many state employees and retirees.

Nationally, health insurance costs have been rising at double-digit rates for the last four years, and this trend is expected to continue for several years to come. Over a year ago, the state's Group Insurance Board, which manages the state employee health insurance program in conjunction with the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF), studied ways to hold down the state's spiraling health insurance costs. The Board recommended several changes in the state employee health insurance program. One of those changes was the implementation of a three-tiered approach to health insurance purchasing.

The 3-Tier model, recommended by the Group Insurance Board and included by Governor Doyle in his biennial budget proposal, is a significant reform of the current system. This model was designed to address the problems identified with the current pricing structure, while maintaining high-quality, low-cost health care coverage.

While still maintaining a uniform medical insurance benefits package, each plan has now been assigned to one of three tiers based on the risk-adjusted, per-member-per-month (PMPM) cost of each plan. The PMPM adjusted cost method measures the relative efficiency with which a plan is able to provide the benefits and the quality of care required by the Board. The theory underpinning this model suggests that health plans should have incentives to provide high quality health care efficiently and hold down

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3-TIER MODEL EMPHASIZES QUALITY (CONT.)

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their costs to the state, and that participants should be directed to the most efficient plans and not just the least expensive. Through the analysis developed by ETF, the Group Insurance Board, and the Board's actuaries, health plans were given credit for serving high-risk populations if they delivered services efficiently to that population. Similarly, plans were not rewarded merely for having a better risk profile if they did not provide health care efficiently. Plans were also given extra credit if they scored well on measures of quality, patient safety, and customer satisfaction.

On August 26, 2003, the Group Insurance Board announced the results of the health plan bids and the assignment of those plans to tiers. ETF is pleased to report that seventeen health plans have been assigned to Tier 1, and four plans to Tier 2. Only the new Standard Plan (redesigned as a preferred provider model plan, replacing the old Standard Plan I and Standard Plan II) remains in Tier 3. Employee contributions in each of these tiers will be established through collective bargaining and the non-represented and University of Wisconsin System compensation plans.

The new Standard Plan incorporates the efficiencies of preferred provider models. The old Standard Plan I level of benefits will be available when members choose to see an in-network provider, while the old Standard Plan II level of benefits will apply if members choose out-of-network providers. Currently, about 90% of all Wisconsin providers are in-network. A couple of other modifications will be implemented under the new model. The old Standard Plan I had a major medical portion that paid benefits at 80%, while benefits under the base plan were paid at 100%. Under the new

Standard Plan, all in-network benefits will be paid at 100%. Additionally, the old Standard Plan I had no out-of-pocket maximum for prescription drug charges. The new Standard Plan will use a similar drug benefit structure as all other plans, and out of pocket charges for drug coverage will be capped at \$1000 if members use in-formulary prescription drugs. To balance out these benefit improvements, the front-end deductible for in-network benefits will increase from \$25 to \$100 per person (\$200 for family coverage).

All state employees will have access to a plan priced at the Tier 1 level through the State Maintenance Plan, or SMP. SMP was previously offered in the parts of the state that did not have a qualifying HMO. Now, SMP will be made available to employees in any county that does not have a qualified Tier 1 HMO. A referral process and hospital and specialty providers have been added. Because the SMP network is more expensive than a traditional managed care network, employees who join SMP will be asked to pay an annual \$100 deductible (\$200 for family coverage).

Perhaps the most important goal of this reform is containing future costs. Under the 3-Tier model, the state's negotiations with health plans have become more meaningful. Through use of the tiered approach, health plan bids were reduced from 17% increases to 12% increases for 2004. There is no question that health insurance costs are continuing to rise faster than we would like, but reforms such as the switch to the 3-Tier model are important first steps on the road to holding down health care costs in Wisconsin.

For more information and answers to commonly asked questions, please visit the ETF website at etf.wi.gov or the OSER website at oser.state.wi.us.

OSER TRAINING PROGRAMS AND CALENDAR CONTINUE

By Robert Toomey

The Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) will continue to offer human resource training programs to meet the needs of supervisors, managers, and human resource staff. With the ongoing workforce reductions and budget cuts in state government, training is needed now more than ever to provide people with the tools and techniques to effectively perform their jobs.

- To make it easier for agencies to send supervisors to this training, the Advanced Labor Management (ALM) program has been reduced from 5 to 3 days – with a corresponding reduction in course fees – and is now known as the *Accelerated Labor Relations (ALR)* program. Designed to give supervisors and managers an in-depth look at all aspects of state labor relations, the 3-day program is being offered this fall in Madison (November & December).
- *Management: Personnel Administration*, a 3-day pro-

gram, fulfills part of the statutory training requirement for newly appointed supervisors.

- *Management: Leadership*, a 2-day program, fulfills part of the statutory training requirement for newly appointed supervisors.
- The Division of *Affirmative Action* offers training to agencies' affirmative action advisory committees according to their specific needs. For information on this training, please send an e-mail to Janice.Faust@oser.state.wi.us.
- *How to Advance in the Wisconsin Civil Service*, a half-day program which provides information on transfers, reclassifications, promotions, and career planning. Visit the course web page for information on future offerings of this course.

Please check the OSER website's Training section at <http://oser.state.wi.us> for course schedules, descriptions, and registration. The web page also includes contact information for agency training staff, training resources, and "Learning Links" to other training organizations including the Wisconsin State Training Council.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

FOR THE 2004 STATE TRAINING CONFERENCE

By Robert Toomey

The Wisconsin State Training Council is an association of training staff representing all state agencies, advocating the effective use of training to develop the state's workforce and to enable enhanced performance. The Council also provides an opportunity for members to collaborate and share information and training resources across agency lines.

March 2004						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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28	29	30	31			

On March 4, 2004, the Wisconsin State Training Council will present its 3rd annual conference. With the theme, "Creating Success Through Learning," and internationally known keynote speaker Peter Senge (appearing live via satellite), this conference is intended to provide trainers and human resource staff with a training opportunity of their own. Featured speakers will present a number of topics, including adult learning techniques, e-

Learning, workforce learning communities, developing training, marketing training, and others. Please visit the conference web page for more information: <http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/wstc>.

The Wisconsin State Training Council also has a workgroup exploring ways to meeting training needs of supervisors managing in these changing times with workforce reduction. Four scenarios have been identified as specific training needs of supervisors: orienting displaced/replaced team members; facing workload challenges with fewer people and resources; managing new communication challenges; and dealing with a greater span of control, larger staff, and new management. Training programs and website resources will be announced and available soon; check the Council website.

For more information on the Wisconsin State Training Council, including agency contacts, special events, and other information, please visit the Council's web page. It can also be found under the Training section at <http://oser.state.wi.us>.

SCAA PLANS TO CELEBRATE DIVERSITY AWARD

By Claire Dehnert

The State of Wisconsin's Council on Affirmative Action (SCAA) plans to celebrate its fourth annual Diversity Award ceremony at the State Capitol in Madison on October 30, 2003.

October 2003						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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The diversity award program was established in 2000 to recognize the achievements of outstanding equal employment opportunity and affirmative action (EEO/AA) practices among state agencies and University of Wisconsin system campuses. In these difficult times of significant budget reductions in state agencies and universities, EEO/AA programs are more important than ever. By highlighting best practices in EEO/AA,

the diversity award program encourages replication of these procedures in all state agencies

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"...this conference is intended to provide trainers . . . with a training opportunity of their own."

"...fourth annual Diversity Award ceremony at the State Capitol in Madison on October 30, 2003."



We're on the Web!
Oser.state.wi.us

October 2003

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WISCONSIN EMPLOYEE SUGGESTION PROGRAM

By Robert Toomey

The State Employee Suggestion Board reviews employee suggestions implemented at the agency level and grants certificates and/or cash awards. During the fiscal year which began July 1, 2002, and ended June 30, 2003, the Board received 22 suggestions recommending service improvements and cost

*"Total annual savings
 from suggestions . . . were
 over \$180,000..."*

savings from employees at four agencies and university campuses. Total annual savings from suggestions received in the fiscal year were over \$180,000; over five years, nearly \$800,000 will be saved.

In addition to regular awards, the Board also presents special annual awards every fall at the State Capitol; this year's ceremony will be held in November when the award-winners will be announced. Check the website for the complete details about ceremony's date and time and, by mid-November, a list of the award-winners with a special photo album.

Also at the Employee Suggestion Program website, there are previous award-winning suggestions, an overview of the process, agency contacts, and the suggestion form – which can be filled in on-screen, printed, and submitted to the agency's coordinator. Suggestions are initially evaluated and implemented at the agency level and successful suggestions are forwarded to the state-level program at OSER for review by the Board.

Please visit the Wisconsin Employee Suggestion Program website at <http://SUGGEST.state.wi.us>.



DIVERSITY AWARDS (CONT.)

(Continued from page 8)

and universities. This year, the council has added a new Educational Diversity Award to recognize the efforts and achievements of institutions of higher learning in preparing minorities, women, and persons with disabilities for employment within the Wisconsin civil service system.

Winners of previous diversity awards programs include: the Department of Justice and University of Wisconsin–Parkside in year 2000, the Department of Workforce Development and Public Service Commission in year 2001, and the Department of Revenue and



Who will win the 2003 Diversity Award???

University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee in year 2002. A few other state agencies and universities received honorable mention for their program merits and special achievements, which can be found at <http://oser.state.wi.us> under Human Resource Services/Affirmative Action. The council plans to announce the 2003 winners

in late September.

The State Council on Affirmative Action, appointed by the Governor and legislative leaders, "shall serve in a direct advisory capacity to the director (of the Office of State Employment Relations) and ...shall evaluate the progress of affirmative action programs throughout the civil service system, seek compliance with state and federal regulations and recommend improvements in the state's affirmative action efforts as an employer." (Sec. 230.46, Wis. Stats.) Currently the council has twelve members, a majority of which are minorities, women and people with disabilities. Meetings are held regularly and are open to the public.